Concepts in English Linguistics

Session 3: Morphology and Word Formation

Acronym Shortening formed out of initials and pronounced as a word rather than spelled out: *radar, laser, NATO*

Allomorph One morphological realization of a given functional transformation: *dogs, oxen, children*

Back conversion Shortening by dropping a perceived suffix: *edit, enthuse*

Blending Shortening by combining two or more words: *hangry, sext, smog*

Blocking A restriction on the productivity of derivational productivity caused by the prior existence of another word with the same meaning a given derivation would have achieved

Borrowing Adapting a foreign word to the target language: *passé, sauna*

Bound morpheme A morpheme that cannot form a word by itself: *en-, -ly*

Clipping Shortening by dropping the beginning or end of a word: *ad, phone*

Coinage The creation of a new word

Compounding The combination of preexisting words: *telephone booth, no-hitter*

Conversion As-is adaptation to a different word class: *boot (v), impact (v)*

Derivation Adaptation to a different word class or meaning through affixation: *rewrite, tenderness*

Derivational morpheme A bound morpheme that may be added onto a word to change its sense or grammatical category: *un-, pre-, -ness, -ic*

Eponymy Using a personal name as a common noun: *scrooge, mentor, volt*

Ex nihilo Without formal antecedent: *quark*

Free morpheme A morpheme that can form a word by itself: *fish, for, gone*

Functional morpheme A free morpheme that is a function word: *of*

Head The semantically and grammatically dominant element in a compound

Hypocorism Clipping in which the omitted final element is replaced with a dimunitive suffix: *telly*

Inflectional morpheme A bound morpheme that conveys grammatical information: *-ed, -ing, -s, -'s*

Initialism Shortening forming a word out of initials, which are spelled out: *PDA, PSA, BBC*

Lexical conditioning The determination of allomorphic form on a word-by-word basis, so each word has to be learned together with the allomorphs of the morpheme in question

Lexical morpheme A free morpheme carrying lexical meaning: *word*

Loan translation The element-for-element translation of a foreign word: *foreword, thought experiment, Gehirnwäsche*

Modifier The semantically and grammatically less prominent element in a compound

Morph Any realization of a morpheme, regardless of form: *bits, bids, buses*

Morphological conditioning The determination of allomorphic form depending on adjacent morphemes

Nonce word A word coined for a single occasion

Onomatopoeia Formation based on a sound associated with the concept being named: *shriek, boom*

Phonological conditioning The determination of allomorphic form on the basis of the phonological context in which the morpheme occurs

Productivity Degree to which a process or morpheme continues to contribute new forms

Semantic loan The borrowing of a foreign sense into an existing lexeme: *überziehen* to mean "overdraw"

Trade name A brand name adopted into the general lexicon: *aspirin, tupperware*

Truncation Shortening by leaving out part of the base word; see Clipping